

5 Easter Year A

Lections: Act 7:55-60; Ps. 31:1-5,15-16; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

It is a joy to be back with you on this 5th Sunday of our Easter celebration. Before delving into our readings this morning, I want to give a big “thank you” to everyone who helped me have an uninterrupted time of rest, reflection, and renewal at my CREDO conference last week, especially our amazing staff, Chris, Patrick, and Cathy; David Killian who so ably preached and presided; our first-rate wardens, Ellen, Scott, and Karin; and all of our countless ministry leaders, Vestry members, and all of you—thank you.

Now we turn to breaking open the Word this morning. Starting with last week’s “Good Shepherd” Sunday, the lectionary often uses the second half of Eastertide to place us in the disciples’ shoes as Jesus prepares to ascend into heaven, leaving them behind once again in body but never again in Spirit. Depending on the lectionary year, it can get a bit confusing, since the readings are usually taken from Jesus’s long monologues and prayers that John’s gospel places before the crucifixion and resurrection even as we are here between Easter and Pentecost. But it does so for a very good reason, because after the spiritual intensity of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter, we are left, as the disciples were, asking very big questions: now what happens? What’s next? Where do we go from here?

And as we ask those questions, Jesus, as he’s wont to do, doesn’t give us direct answers, but he does assure us that wherever he is, there we will be also. That can be a little hard to realize and remember some times, even for me. So I’d like to take a risk with you, Grace Church, and invite you to participate in a guided meditation that our conference leader lead us in last week.¹ This is an invitation, so please participate as you feel comfortable.

Let’s settle in. I invite you to close your eyes. Place your feet fully on the floor. Let your shoulders drop. Draw your attention to your breath and allow your breath to deepen.

Now, Picture yourself standing in front of your house or the building you live.
You see your front door. You look to your side and you see Jesus standing next to you.
You have been expecting him.
Invite him into your house or apartment.
How does he respond?

Go into your house.
Who greets him?
Are there animals in the house?
Other people?
How do they welcome Jesus?
Where do you go together?
Which room do you sit in?
How do you sit with each other?

¹ The conference leader was the Rev. Scott White and I’m thankful to my co-participant, the Rev. Rachel Fields for suggesting this idea.

Does he say anything to you?

Jesus asks you to show you a part of your home that is just for you, your refuge:

That is to a place in your home that is special to you.

Do you take his hand to lead him there?

What do you do when you get there?

Now imagine that there are boxes in this room,

boxes that represent different parts of your life and different seasons of your life.

What boxes are present?

What do they look like?

What do they contain?

Invite Jesus to open the boxes.

How does it feel to have him look at them?

Are there any boxes you want him to look at in particular?

Are there any you want him to avoid?

Does he say anything to you as he looks through these boxes?

It's almost time for Jesus to go.

Put the boxes away somewhere in the room

And return to the main part of your house where you were before.

Thank Jesus for coming.

And then say goodbye.

And now gently open your eyes.

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also." Amen.